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[Sabbatical Report]

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My sabbatical research took place in Seville, Spain studying the art of Flamenco dancing. I rented an apartment in the Alameda De Hercules area located in the north half of the city's historic center where local flamenco entertainment was in abundance. In this beautiful square, there was always dancing and singing throughout the night.

Flamenco is a Spanish folk dance filled with vigorous and passionate movements that has a unique tradition. In Seville, I studied a mix of Flamenco choreography and technique for three hours a day, five days week at Andres Marin and Juan Polvillo schools of Flamenco dance. Students from Europe, United States and Japan made the classes very diverse. However, there seems to be a universal shortage of men in dance because I was the only male in all of my classes. The two schools were very different in their pedagogical approach but both exceptional in their passion and enthusiasm to pass along the Flamenco tradition.

At the Andres Marin School, I studied two days of Flamenco choreography and three days of technique classes weekly. The instructor Vicky Bares classes were very technical and we worked on footwork with different tempos for fifty -sixty minutes of non stop tapping and stomping. The rest of the class was devoted to the complex use of arms and hands. On technique days, she we would use a metronome to work on different speeds, sounds and beats. A guitar accompanist for learning musicality and performing choreography played the other two days.

I studied three days of Flamenco choreography and two days of technique classes weekly at The Juan Polvillo School. The instructor Pilar Ortega classes were very intense by the passion she brought to the classroom. A native of Seville, she breathed and lived Flamenco. She would improvise and make up steps as she taught and sang with the music. I felt as though I was a gypsy learning Flamenco from a sister in the community. I enjoyed these classes the most because it felt as though I was not learning technique but immersed in the art of flamenco and the culture of Spain.

The first week of classes were a little bit frustrating learning to be a student again and not thinking like a teacher and critique the classes. I had to learn to dance on heels and use the taps on the bottom of the flamenco shoes. I never studied American tap dancing or any type of dancing that uses your feet to make sounds. It was a new experience for me as a ballet dancer who is use to dancing in soft canvas slippers. I felt very awkward in these hard-heeled shoes trying to make different sounds and rhythms with my feet while making elegant movements of the arms and head.

It took me a week to get over not being in my comfort zone of the American style of dancing. I video taped the classes and practiced every day intensively on the technique and choreography. As I became more confident, I started to enjoy my daily lessons of sweat, rhythms and movements. By the end of my training, the

teachers gave me compliments and were amazed on how much I progressed and advanced in the classes. The other students who had been studying there for years started to ask me questions on how to complete a step and what the choreography was that we learned in previous classes. It felt good to excel in dance again.

Living in Seville the heart of Flamenco tradition was an invaluable experience. I not only acquired a new dance form but I was immersed in the Spanish Flamenco culture. I attended Flamenco concerts and festivals where I was able to observe and participate in this beautiful art form. On April 24, 2014, I will premiere a new Flamenco/Ballet choreography at the Evening of Dance concert at Russell Miller Hall.